

NEWSLETTER

“THE WOOLLY WAFFLER” March 2026



PRESIDENT:	Colleen Strahan
PRESIDENT Elect:	Caroline Davidson
LITERACY:	Colleen Strahan
SERVICE:	Marg Johnstone
MEMBERSHIP:	Trish Neal
SECRETARY:	Minutes - Robyn Stephens Correspondence - Helen Verry
TREASURER:	Mary Scobie
SUNSHINE LADY:	Raewyn Flexman
SPEAKERS:	Mary Anderson
NEWSLETTER:	Ros Snow

Kia ora koutou, welcome all to the March newsletter.

Thank you to all members who have volunteered this month throughout the Community.

Some members were collecting on behalf of the Child Cancer Appeal at Te Kūiti New World on 13th March.

Thank you in advance to those members who will be collecting for the Anzac Poppy Appeal at the BP station in Te Kūiti in April.

Thank you also for your donations for the Food bank.

Ngā mihi.



We had a very well attended meeting in February with a lot to catch up on.

We were well entertained by our speaker members, Helen and Caroline together with our guest Sibyl Iremonger, with their tales of the trip they took last year to Scandinavia.

They were part of a group of 6 friends meeting in Copenhagen and then going on to the Faroe Islands for a week.

Back to Copenhagen then on to Oslo in Norway by ferry via the fjords.

A train trip up to the mountains and down gorges, looking out for trolls.

Then 12 days on a Hurtigruten coastal ship from Bergen to the top of Norway in the Arctic circle and back. This was a working ship with many stops for supplies along the way, in and out of fjords.

On to the UK to Exeter and Cornwall to catch up with Dr Rosie Richardson.

A fabulous trip on which they enjoyed each others company and friends as well as connecting with local people.





CHATTER FOR MARCH/ APRIL 2026 WOOLLY WAFFLER

Greetings Ladies,

We have had a long run of fine weather – surely it can't last. We shall see in the coming days! The trees have a slight brown tinge & the mornings are just a little cooler. It was so good to get on our bikes on Sunday & with Marg, ride out to Hangatiki – not too hot, & not much traffic – just a bit of a pull up Gadsby Road at the last.

We gave our German Med student a beanie to take with him to Queenstown earlier this month & he was glad of it one of his days down there. He has enjoyed the touristy sights – Waitangaru Falls, Black water rafting, various local walks, the Tongariro Crossing, Weta Workshop, Te Rapa, Wellington & Queenstown Gondolas, Milford Sound, the Able Tasman walk, Now he's on his way to Rotorua via Taupo, to see the Red Woods, the bubbling mud & geysers, then on to Hobbiton. He has certainly made good use of his time in New Zealand – but is to return to Germany via China next week, not via Dubai as was booked months ago. (Maybe he'll need his beanie in his last few days)

Winter sports are gearing up for competition. How will the All Blacks go with a new coaching team? How well will the NZ Ice Hockey team go just coming out of summer? The women's cricket team is enjoying some success. The men not so much! Basket Ball, Netball, - And the NZ Football team have new gear for their World Cup adventure. So much to watch!

We had occasion to go out one evening recently, driving along Te Kumi Road about 8pm & came across many road cones, but no sign of action. We returned an hour later to more cones, one man & two trucks but still no action. I wish I'd counted the cones! The next day I drove along again & a good length of tar seal had been laid in the night. The cones were still there. Did anyone count them I wonder?!

We watch with some alarm at the actions in the Middle East. Such devastation and far-reaching repercussions of which some involved would have no idea. The next few weeks will be difficult for many.

“The most successful Chimp leaders were gentle, caring and familial. Males who tried to rule by asserting their dominance through violence, tyranny & threat did not last”. - Jane Goodall.

Colleen



A lovely early morning view on Old Te Kūiti Road, taken by Colleen's daughter



Colleen fancies this 1931 Riley Tourer to go to the supermarket!

Photographed at the Blenheim Veteran car rally

This is an excerpt from the latest Shepherdess Magazine, an article about our member, Robyn.

“My Grandmother, Robyn Stephens, is a shepherdess. Now in her seventies, Grandma is still contract mustering. She has six dogs and likes to keep them busy”

When we received this note from Maija Stephens (Rongomaiwahine, Ngāti Kahungunu ki Heretaunga, Ngāti Rangī), we knew this was a story we wanted to share - and along the way Maija ended up becoming one of our freelance photographers.

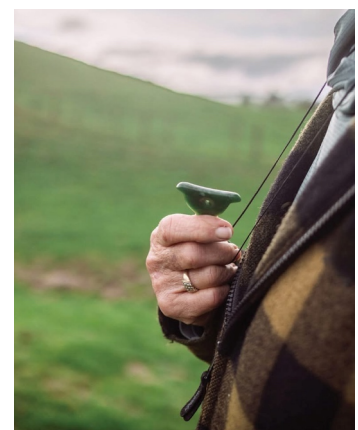
Maija writes of her grandmother, “She is also a passionate dog trainer and trialist, competing nationally and taking after her father, Les Knight, who was a nationally revered dog trialist champion. With a background in school teaching, she also teaches rangatahi - showing young, aspiring farmers how to train dogs and muster. She has spent much of her life dedicated to ensuring that future generations have steady footing in this world.”

“I grew up with her and my grandfather on a sheep and beef farm between Te Kūiti and Piopio in the King Country. They have worked to restore the land they farm, with native reforestation projects and regenerative farming practices - with the intention to nurture both land and their mokopuna, so we have a place to thrive and return to, always. Both my grandparents are Pākehā, and they take great care to acknowledge the original custodians of the land, having raised their grandchildren on that whenua. My grandma’s story is layered and beautiful and I’m proud of her hard work to provide for all her descendants. He mana wahine ia.”

Robyn Stephens, a Te Rohe Pōtae King Country farmer and grandmother of nine, took up dog trials at the age of fifty-nine, following in her father’s footsteps, and at seventy-six is still working as a casual musterer. Here, she reflects on her connection to the past and how her whānau Māori has influenced her.

“When I started, everybody came up to me and said, “Your dad gave me my first pup,” “Your dad is the reason I am farming today,” or “Your dad helped me.” It kept his memory alive for me, which was pretty wonderful, really. My mum was disabled with a very bad stroke in 2014 but lived on for another three years, and on my way home from a trial I’d always call in to her home on the farm and talk to her about the people I’d met. She’d gone everywhere with Dad, everywhere, and so she was able to relive that through me, too, in a way. Even though Dad had passed on, I’d be using his phrases, his whistles, his turn of phrase – which was sometimes a bit “blue” – but it all just came flooding back. I hadn’t actually gone to trials specifically with him, and I had to learn all over again. I’ve watched his videos, read his book, and self-taught along the way.”

Writer: As Told To Arpège Taratoa-Rangikura (Ngāi Te Rangī, Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Rārua)
Photographer: Maija Stephens (Rongomaiwahine, Ngāti Kahungunu Ki Heretaunga, Ngāti Rangī)



Robyn, we are incredibly proud of you, your work and all that you do. Congratulations on this fabulous article and so good that Maija started this all off for you. Ka rawe, tau kē!

Maija



Photo Gallery



Two of our members were guests at the Grandparent's day at St Pauls College in Hamilton.

Left: Elaine and Rob with their grandson, Oscar in Year 9.

Right: Marg with James Verry at her last Grandparent's day.



Mary S at Bushy Park in Wanganui,



Mary enjoying sunshine and view at Cape Palliser,



Colin at Whitecliffs Boulders on the Rangitikei river near Mangaweka.

They recently enjoyed a few weeks away in the caravan in the Wanganui and Wairarapa area.



Mary A thoroughly recommends holidaying in Rangiputa, Karikari Peninsula. The weather looks fabulous.

Ros enjoyed both the mosaic art and the coffee at L'Arte Cafe in Acacia Bay, Taupo.



It is a privilege to be able to include a profile of a member like Robyn's this month. It would be great if we could all write a short profile of the things we do. We may not all be featured in a National magazine but I know we all have interesting things about our lives to share. Would anyone like to volunteer for next month? Include a couple of photos as well. We could all start writing during these wintery months ready for the call up. Thanks in advance, don't be shy! Nga mihi nui.



At our April meeting we will welcome a visit from Jenny Wright-Gardiner, a member of the District 15 Board.

We will also welcome two new members: Janey Martin and Carol Buist. They will be inducted at our meeting.

Nau mai, haere mai ki tō tatōu karapu.



Janey



Carol

International days

April 2nd: International Children's book day celebrated on the birthday of Hans Christian Anderson

April 7th: World Health day

April 11th: Altrusa Anniversary day

April 15th: World Art day

Coming up

April 7th: Next meeting, please remember a donation for Food bank. Apologies to Caroline.

April 11th: The Great NZ Muster and Running of the sheep.

April 24th: Anzac poppy appeal at BP station

Our subs are due soon, ideally by the end of May.



Happy Birthday

Birthdays in April

Jude Carter
Mary Scobie



Reading won't solve your problems, but neither will dusting. Choose wisely.